2: Mountford E-5 (1954) 1958
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A *mopaditi* has been known to hit an aboriginal on the head with a throwing stick, causing him to foam at the mouth and become stiff and rigid. The natives cure this *mopaditi* sickness by heating pads of paper-bark and pressing them against the sides of the face or over the sick man's ears until his muscles relax.

Once, when a young woman went hunting in the forest by herself, a male *mopaditi* took her away, fed her on a special bush food until she became, like the *mopaditis* themselves, invisible to human eyes. One evening, after many weeks, the *mopaditi* brought the girl back to a place near the camp, stood her against a tree, gave a loud whistle and left.

When relatives found her, she was demented and deaf, with cold, clammy skin and staring eyes. Quickly they lit a fire, heated her hands, and held them, palms inwards, against the sides of her face. When her body became a little warmer, her relatives pressed heated pads of paper-bark against the sides of her face and over her ears, until she went to sleep. After several days of such treatment, the girl recovered and was able to tell what had happened.

The old men warned her never again to go walking in the forest by herself because should the *mopaditis* recapture her, it might not be possible to bring her back to health.

The aborigines also told me about the time when some *mopaditis* stole an old woman, *Incampuna*, took her into the jungle and covered her with boughs. When her relatives found her, sick and unconscious, they brought her back to camp, shouting loudly to stop the *mopaditis* from following. As before, they applied heated pads of paper-bark to "open up" her head until she became well again.

Plate 47A, B, pictures the grave of the wife of the artist, *Muramajua*. At *a*, is the face of the spirit of the wife, the horse-shoe design, *b*, representing her hair. The oval *e*, is a small stringy-bark tree, *o*, a large stringy-bark tree, and *p*, are bloodwood trees near the grave.

At *k*, is a stony hill near the burial place, *l*, *n*, are areas of jungle near by, and *m*, is the forested uplands.

A long fighting-stick, *tumutukamuta*, *g*, and a throwing stick, *muruguna*, *j*, are used by the *mopaditis* to strike their human victims on the head, and make them insensible.

2. DEATH AND BURIAL

Although there were minor differences between the burial of the man, *Waniamperi*, the details of which I gathered from informants, and the burial

2: Mountford E-5 (1954) 1958
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764 of *Pulanimkuwi's* wife, *Nulatini*, which I saw, the general pattern was similar. I shall, however, describe both burials, that of *Nulatini* being the more detailed.

(1) *The Burial of Waniamperi*

On the day that *Waniamperi* died, *Murawani*, one of his near relatives, who wanted the dead man buried near his mother, paid a young "worker"[88] a sum of money and two loin cloths to dig the grave.

When the corpse was brought to the burial ground, a number of relatives had a last look at the dead man before he was laid on a series of logs, placed transversely across the bottom of the grave.

This act was a signal for concerted mourning, the women beating themselves with sticks and the men cutting their heads. For personal safety it is [753] [626] imperative that each man and woman show excessive grief, real or feigned, otherwise the *mopaditi*, annoyed at the lack of grief, will make the offending person ill.

After the mourning died down, the "workers" placed boughs on the body and filled in the grave, leaving a small mound on top (Pl. 24c).

[533] While this work was being carried out, the relatives stood on one side of the grave, either singing the *amburu*, the mourning song, or the rain song of Wailu, the totem of *Tiparawilimiri*, *Waniamperi's* father. To the chanting [535] of this song, the men acted the rain dance (Pl. 30a). The aborigines did not stage the totemic dances or chant the songs belonging to the fire totem of Wuriupi (*Waniamperi's* own totem), because, to have done so, would have especially attracted the attention of his *mopaditi*.

The "workers" laid *Waniamperi's* personal belongings at the base of a tree (Pl. 24d), tied his loin cloth and tobacco to the top of a thin sapling which had been driven into the ground at the head of the grave, made a large fire, and left a container of water.

[775] The aborigines believe that the *mopaditi*, seeing his belongings near at hand, water to drink and fire to warm himself and cook the food he gathers in the surrounding forest, will stay near the grave until the time comes for him to leave the locality.

While the "workers" were engaged on those tasks, the rest of the burial party quietly left, not looking behind, lest the *mopaditi* follow them to their camp.

[767] [88] These "workers" or *wanarai*, being distant relatives of the dead, are in little danger from the *mopaditis*. Therefore, it is safe for them to clean the site, dig the grave, handle the body, and carry out other tasks associated with burial. They are paid for their work by the chief mourners at the final *pukamuni* rituals.

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773 881 of the *kulama* ceremony, became the boobook owl, his wife, *Pinuma*, the barn owl, *Jurumu*, the wedge-tailed eagle, *Jirakui*, the white-headed sea-eagle, *Tupatupini*, a small owl, and so on.

(2) *The Second Kulama Ceremony*

After the close of *palaneri* times, the *Ningauis*, a spirit people, who had been present at the first *kulama*, performed a second ceremony on the same island, Turiturina, as was used by *Purutjikini* during the creation period. On the second occasion, the *Ningauis* carried out the complete *kulama*, which included not only the preparation of the poisonous *kulama* yam for food, but also the performance of all the grades of initiation from that of the *Marukumuni* to the *Mikingula*.

At its completion, the *Ningauis* decreed that the form of the ceremony with its proceeding and initiation rituals, should always be the same. The aborigines believe that if this form is altered, a mysterious sickness, called [753] *taini* will punish them by making everyone ill.

(3) *The Myth of the Ningauis*

After the second *kulama*, the *Ningauis* made their home in the mangrove swamps of a small island, Imaluna, near Cape Helvetius, south-western Bathurst Island (Fig. 1).

776 The *Ningauis* are somewhat like the present-day aborigines, except that they are small people, about two feet high, with long hair and very short feet, their footmarks resembling those of an oversized dog. The aborigines often see these tracks on the edge of the mangrove swamps of Imaluna (Pl. 22c).

Should an aboriginal, when hunting through the swamps, go too near a home of the *Ningauis*, one of the *Ningauis* by calling, "Eeh", would cause the whole place to be suddenly enveloped in complete darkness. The native could bring the light back again by striking the trunk of a mangrove tree with a stick, but, in the meantime, the *Ningauis*, by taking advantage of the darkness, would have sneaked away. Therefore, no aboriginal has seen a *Ningaui* even though they are often heard in the mangrove swamps calling "Eeh, eeh", to each other.

When the *Ningauis* chant their songs after dark, the mangrove swamps become as brightly lit as in the day-time. There are stories of how aboriginal hunters, lured by the songs and the light, have wandered among the tangled mangroves to see what was going on, but as soon as the *Ningauis* heard the intruders, they finished their song with the word "Eeh",[10] which made the

[533] [10] The *Ningaui* songs chanted by *Jikungkakumi*, at one of the *ilanias* of *Wuniamperi* (p. 74), all ended with a long drawn-out "Eeh".

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On the morning of the appointed day, the women went into the jungle, dug up a large number of both species of yams, brought them back to camp, and prepared them for cooking.

In the meantime, the male and female *Marukumuni* initiates had been sent to an appointed place in the jungle and told to wait until some of the *Mikingulas* visited them in the late afternoon. In the meantime other fully initiated men were painting the *Wadjeniati* initiates with a new body design (Pl. 42B).

In the late afternoon some members of the *kulama* party went to the place where the *Marukumuni* initiates were hiding, painted them black (Pl. 42B), and put new cockatoo feathers in their hair. While this was being done the male initiates pulled out their pubic hairs, and calling out "Booh-booh", threw them in all directions. When the decorations were complete, each initiate singed the hair from his legs but not his face, head or arms.[83] It is believed that this *Marukumuni* ritual assists in creating more thunderstorms and so prolonging the wet season.

Meanwhile, the remainder of the higher grades of the *kulama*, the *Mikingulas*, the *Mikiatarinas* and the *Mikintaras* with their female counterparts, went into the forest and, cutting the bark of the milk-wood tree (*Alstonia* sp.) used the white sap to paint their shoulders and faces, and to make a line down the centre of their abdomens. The men also put thick sap on their beards, which made them stand out stiffly around their faces.[84]

By the time the *Marukumuni* initiates had been decorated, brought back to camp and seated behind a low screen of boughs, the edible yams were cooked and ready for eating.

The leader, taking one of the *juruguni* and one of the *karawani* yams, bit a small portion from each, chewed it up and spat it in all directions. His actions were repeated by all the fully initiated people. The aborigines believe that the portions of chewed-up yam make the *mopaditis* so sick (they are always present to watch the *kulama* rituals), that they leave the locality. All the *kulama* people, with the exception of the *Marukumuni* and *Wadjeniati* initiates then sat down to a meal of the edible yams.

The male initiates of the *Marukumuni* and *Wadjeniati* grades were given their food by the female initiates of their grade in the same manner as a *pukumuni* man, i.e., the food was placed in their mouths, it must not touch any part of their body. If this taboo were broken, the *mopaditis* would make them ill.

[83] The female initiates do not carry out this ritual.

[84] Spencer, 1928, p. 660, Pl. 463, who refers to this phase in his description of the *kulama* illustrates the decorated men.

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88 ill. The *Marukumunis* were fed behind their bark shelter and the *Wadjeniatis* in the open camp.

(2) *The Opening Rituals*

After dark, on the day following the ceremonial eating of the edible yam, the fully initiated *kulama* men, and all people above the grade of *Mikinatrina*, prepared for the opening ceremony by clearing an oval about fourteen feet long and six feet wide. The *Marukumuni* initiates were brought from their hiding place, the *Wadjeniatis* from their camp and both were seated just outside the ceremonial ground. Neither of those grades, however, took part in the opening rituals.

372 753 In the middle of the ceremonial ground were two smouldering logs, but no flames, for fear of attracting *tāni*, the *kulama* sickness. Among the trees outside of the ring, were a number of families of uninitiated men, women and children.

Normally the *kulama* party would have been made up of *Mikiatatas*, *Mikiatarimas* and *Mikingulas*, and the songs chanted by the men in that order.

177 533 881 539 On the occasion of our visit the ceremony opened when a *Mikingula*, *Wurarbui*, seated on the ground, beating his throwing sticks, started to hum a song softly. Becoming more confident, he stood up, and pacing backward and forward still beating his sticks, chanted the following three songs.[88]

(*a*) "My father was king, therefore I am the Prince of Wales. As King George was King, so was the old man on the hill, my (dead) father. I will have warships, money and a flag of red and white." When the singer mentioned his dead father there was a high-pitched wail among the near relatives.

(*b*) The second song dealt with the invitation he had received to dance before the Queen of England. "When the Queen was in England, she said 'I would like to see a black-fellow dance', and so I went up. King Philip watched me a lot while I danced."

(*c*) "My uncle in Darwin said to me 'Why haven't you made a lot of *pukamuni* arm rings. If you don't soon do so, you'll cause a lot of trouble among the *pukamuni* people."

Muramajua also chanted three songs;

(*a*) In the first, of which I did not collect the words, he explained, at length,

[88] This man, who was the ceremonial leader of the *pukamuni* ceremony, described earlier, had been invited, only a few months previously, to visit the southern States, and dance before the Queen of England. Naturally, this left such a strong impression on his mind that many of his songs dealt with that remarkable experience.

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how a slow canoe journey had made him late for a recent *pukamani* ceremony.

(*b*) "I was sick in the Darwin hospital. Sister Philips said it was because I had had too much grog."

(*c*) "There was a man at Cockle Point (opposite the Bathurst Island Mission), who wanted to kill me with a spear. So I changed myself into a mullet and he didn't see me."

Another singer chanted,

(*a*) "I am a goose and a man cast his throwing stick and hit me."

(*b*) "I want that girl from Bathurst Island to wash her with fresh water to make it square for giving away my sister."[86]

Another *Mikingula*, *Palitara*, aired his differences with a woman, *Batali*, in the following song.

(*a*) "I fed *Batali*, but she did not give her daughter to me as a wife."[87]

(3) *Collecting the Kulama Yam*

Early on the following morning, the *Mikinatrinas*, *Mikinataras*, the *Mikinatarimas* and *Mikingulas*, went to the ceremonial ground of the previous evening. They first dipped their hands in a bark container filled with water, throwing some over their bodies; then, taking a mouthful, they squirted water into the air in imitation of rain, afterwards calling out "Oom-oom", to symbolize thunderstorms. Taking two small sticks, one in each hand, the men used them to clean the wax from their ears, afterwards standing the sticks upright in the ground.[88]

Placing their palms on a sheet of bark covered with white paint, the men patted their hair, chest, wrists and pubes (Pl. 44c), turning toward the north as they again called out "Oom-oom", in imitation of thunder.

Following this ritual, each *kulama* man painted another with a design in white (Pl. 42a). The leader then picked up the bark basket, held it on his arm, and facing north, south, east and west, again called "Oom-oom", while he made a drum-like sound, symbolical of thunder, by hitting the basket with his hand. After this the men set out to collect the *kulama* yams. They were

[86] I did not find out the significance of this ritual.

[87] When a woman promises her daughter to a man, it is the duty of the future son-in-law to give her continuous presents of food. On this occasion, the woman had accepted *Palitara's* gifts, but when her daughter was old enough, she gave the girl to another man.

Quarrelling at a *kulama* ceremony is forbidden, otherwise *taini*, the *kulama* sickness, will destroy all the participants. This prohibition allows an aboriginal, such as *Palitara*, to air his grievance without causing a quarrel, even though, as on this occasion, the defaulting person was present.

[88] The meaning of this ritual is obscure. According to the aborigines it prevents trouble and quarrelling during the *kulama* rituals.

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881 led by the *Mikinatrinas*, carrying the baskets, followed by the *Mikinataras*, the *Mikiatarimas*, and the *Mikingulas*. No *kulama* woman accompanied this party.

As the *kulama* men entered the jungle they separated, each searching for vines which indicated the presence of the yam.[10] Before digging, however, the [824] [753] *kulama* men, softly calling "Oom-oom", gently patted the ground to wake up the yams, for, should any yam get a fright, its spirit, becoming annoyed, would make everyone ill with the *kulama* sickness. When digging the yams, the men were most careful not to break even one of the fine roots (Pl. 44D).

On filling in the holes, the men again made the thunder call, "Oom-oom", [821] which, they said, would cause more rain to fall before the day was over. One aboriginal accidentally broke a *kulama* yam while digging it. Instantly, he was on his feet, and, with the broken yam in his palm, dodged in and out among the trees, to escape the spirit of sickness released by the angry yam. After a few minutes, however, he returned, placed the broken yam carefully in the basket with the rest, and resumed his digging. His companions said that it was fortunate that he had only damaged the yam slightly, otherwise, its spirit would have made not only the careless aboriginal, but all of the *kulama* people ill.

When sufficient yams were collected, the party returned to camp in the same order as they went out, i.e., *Mikinatrinas*, *Mikinataras*, *Mikiatarimas* and *Mikingulas*. The *Mikinatrinas* carried the yams to the foot of a blood-wood tree, called the *wuringaleta*, cleared the grass from around the base and, taking the yams from the basket, placed them on the ground. They were covered with leaves by the female initiates, the *Mikinatriningas*.

(4) *The Preparation of the Ceremonial Ground*

In the late afternoon, the *kulama* men and the male initiates, excluding the *Marukumuni* and the *W'adjeniatis*, prepared the ceremonial ground, the *milimika*.

372 The men walked toward an open space in the forest, and with low cries, 881 beat the ground with sticks, while the leader, pulling up a tuft of grass, threw it into the air. At the place where it fell, the men dug a small circle, the *tumarapi* (navel), in which the yams were to be cooked. Then, sitting down, the men pushed the sand and grass outwards with their feet until the *milimika*, about fifteen feet in diameter, was cleared and surrounded by a low mound of earth and grass.

[222] [137] [10] The *kulama* yam (*Dioscorea sativa*, variety *rotunda*) (Pl. 44D), is about the size of a hen's egg and covered with hairs similar to a beard. It is held in the palm of the hand until it is placed carefully in the bark basket.

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CHAPTER V

The Spirit People of the Tiwi

776 775 The Tiwi believe that a number of spirit people live on the land, in the swamps, the sea and the sky of their tribal country. They are: the *mopaditis* (p. 61), the spirits of the dead whose homes are in the various totemic localities; the *Ningauis* (p. 124) of the mangrove swamps of south-western Bathurst Island; the *Marapjis*, or rainbow people, living in the swamps; the *Pitipinuis*, or spirit children, who later become aboriginal children; the sea-dogs, *Wankuis*, of the shallow sandbars of the sea; the *Papinjuwaris*, the meteor-men, who live in a place in the sky, far away to the west, and the *Peramauas*, who often befriend the aborigines.

Although the aborigines are afraid of the *Papinjuwaris*, the *Marapjis* and, to some extent, the *Mopaditis*, they do not particularly fear the other spirit people.

000 The aborigines of Oenpelli, western Arnhem Land, however, believe that their countryside is inhabited with a multitude of spirit people (Mountford, 1956, p. 181), some dangerous and some harmless. This is unusual in aboriginal Australia, most tribes fearing only the spirits of the dead.

1. THE METEOR-MEN, THE PAPINJUWARIS

776 The *Papinjuwaris* live, with their wives and children, in a large paper-bark hut at Wangidji, a place far away to the west, where the sky ends.

The men, large and heavily built, have only one eye as bright as a star. The aborigines often see a *Papinjuwari* streaking across the sky, a blazing firestick in one hand and a fighting club in the other.

The *Papinjuwaris* are ghoulish people, who, although their food consists of bandicoots and large centipedes (Fig. 12), are always craving for the bodies of the dead and the blood of the sick to satisfy their degraded appetites.

[821] One evening, the aborigines pointed out a brilliant meteor which they said was a *Papinjuwari*; he was taking the body of *Waniamperi*, whose grave was not far from our camp, back to his companions at Wangidji.

● 753 776 When a *Papinjuwari* hunts for blood, he locates a sick person (by smell), and standing some distance away (they can make themselves invisible) sucks

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blood from the arm of the victim, yet leaves no wound. As the sick person becomes weaker, the *Papinjuwari*, making himself sufficiently small, enters the body through the mouth, and, by drinking up the rest of the blood, kills the victim.

FIG. 12. *The Spirit People*
The Meteor-man, Papinjuwari.

On his return to Wangidji, the meteor-man vomits the stolen blood into a bark container. This provides a drink for the assembled *Papinjuwaris*.

The aborigines stated that, as the Tiwi have no medicine men, they are without protection against these dangerous spirit people.[42]

Pl. 47c is a simple bark painting of the *Papinjuwaris*. The white figures are the ghoulish sky-people, the crescents are moons, and the circles, stars.

Fig. 12 is the copy of a crayon drawing showing a *Papinjuwari*, *a*, inside of his paper-bark hut at Wangidji. On either side of him at *b*, *b*, are the large

[42] Spencer, 1928, p. 671, refers to a song chanted in a *Kulama* ceremony which is supposed to protect the initiates from an evil spirit, the shooting star, *Mukinua* (almost certain to be my *Papinjuwari*); Harney and Elkin, 1942, p. 282, who call the meteor man, Papinowari, or Lampirnpari, state that, if a piece of dried blood of a person is burnt, the smell will attract the meteor-man.

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the background is the sea. The white central transverse panel is the beach at Wulrungku.

The meaning of the designs on the lower panel are similar, the black central and branching lines representing the tracks made by the *Pitipituis* as they travel to and from their camps (the black discs); the encircling lines represent the sand around those camps, and the painted background, the jungle which shelters the little people.

3. THE PARAMANUAS[44]

The *Paramanuas* are short, particularly active, agile men, about three feet high, with thick, powerful limbs, tusk-like teeth, and projecting toe and finger nails.

In general, except for these details, they resemble the aborigines in appearance, eat the same foods and follow a similar way of life.

They live in many places throughout Melville and Bathurst Islands, but no one except those captured by the *Paramanuas*, has seen either them or their homes. As they dislike being talked about, and often make those people ill who do so, I found it somewhat difficult to gather information about the *Paramanuas*.

The homes of the *Paramanuas*, their wives and their children, are spacious underground caves, the entrances to which are openings either in the side of termite mounds, or hollow trees. In these caves, the men store their utensils, weapons and food (Fig. 14). Their cooking fire, like that of the aborigines, is always outside of their camp.

Occasionally a *Paramanua*, wishing to befriend an aboriginal, will watch him for some time. Then one day when the aboriginal is hunting by himself, the *Paramanua* will cast a spear at him. But, before the spear has reached its mark, the *Paramanua* will have caught it and, standing at the back of the aboriginal, will be tickling his ribs. The aboriginal, thoroughly scared, turns to strike his opponent, only to find him again at his back. This game goes on until the aboriginal is exhausted, dizzy and confused. Then hitting him on the side of the head with an open hand, rendering the aboriginal unconscious, the spirit man picks up the prostrate man and carries him to the underground home of the *Paramanuas*.

Awaking to find himself in a dark place, the aboriginal is terrified, but on receiving plenty of food from the *Paramanuas*, and treated with every kindness, the aboriginal loses all fear, and as the weeks go by, all sense of time.

[44] Harney and Elkin, 1942, p. 232, refer to these little people as Barminuar.

2: Mountford E-5 (1954) 1958
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the dead, they should never be taken from him. *Maratji* was so angry over this white man's act of sacrilege that he created a heavy storm to sink the boat and so prevent the theft.

The Maratjis at Maundu

Maundu, a freshwater lagoon on the south-western shores of Bathurst Island is the home of many *Maratjis*, males, females and children, under a leader called *Orini*. The water which flows from the lagoon, across the beach into the sea, is reddish in colour. This, according to the aborigines, is stained by the faeces of the *Maratjis*.

The aborigines of the adjoining *Mandubuka* totem are the only people safe from the attacks of the *Maratjis* of Maundu. To protect a stranger who has to go near Maundu, one of the local men, wiping the perspiration from his own armpits, rubs it over his companion.

The familiar body odour misleads the *Maratjis*, who do not attack the newcomer. Should this strange aboriginal have to cross the stream that flows from Maundu to the sea, a local man first makes the water muddy, then, walking through it instructs the stranger to step in his tracks. The stranger must recompense his guide for this protection. Should the stranger become thirsty and none of the local men are with him, he can safely drink at Maundu if he first makes the water muddy. At the *pukamuni* ceremony of *Waniamperi* which we witnessed at Melville Island, an elderly aboriginal, *Jibunglialuni*, whose nose had been eaten away by yaws, attributed his deformity to the attack of a *Maratji* because he drank from the clear, not the muddy water, of Maundu.

Even when a group of local aborigines has to pass the Maundu lagoon, they travel in single file, the elder men first, the younger men next, then the women and children, each adult placing his feet exactly in the footmarks of the person in front. No woman, during the period of her menses, must go near Maundu. If she did, *Maratji* would kill her. There are good ochres of many colours at Maundu but no one will use them. Tradition tells of an aboriginal, called *Alumgun*, who lost his life because he disregarded this taboo.

One side of a female *pukamuni* basket, Pl. 48c (indicated by the central hole), deals with the myth of *Maratji* at Maundu.

The central hole in the basket is the freshwater lagoon, Maundu; the radiating lines, *a*, *a*, etc., are the *Maratjis* and those at *b*, *b*, etc., strips of white sand on the bottom of the lagoon. The darker circles indicate the red (stained) water which runs from the lagoon, across the beach, into the sea, and the

797 of North Australia, they are fond of a joke. They chuckled
522 delightedly. Father McGrath can preach in the native language,
but dear old Father Goell (every one on the north alludes to him
[198] in these affectionate terms) must deliver his sermons in pidgin.
Sometimes this greatly amuses the congregation, and many
spirited and life-like reproductions are enacted again and again
after the service.

797 WHILE taking a walk round the grounds of the mission
station, an urchin of no more than three and a half years of age
●753 was pointed out. That very morning this little fellow had
761 plunged into the shark-infested straits and saved his baby sister
from drowning. She was unconscious when brought ashore, and
the usual methods of resuscitation were followed by Father
McGrath, who had hurried to the scene. Then arose one of the
difficulties the mission staff are constantly encountering. All the
[754] ills that befall the islanders are attributed to magic. No black
ever dies a natural death: always there is some evilly-disposed
person responsible!

When treatment was commenced, the child had been laid on her stomach while the water was pushed out of her body. The blacks had seen an apparently drowned boy revived when laid on his back, and immediately became excited and angry. It was necessary to turn the child over for a while, otherwise the mission fathers would have been held responsible if she had not recovered. And, all the time that treatment was in progress, an old woman (very much in the way) had sung in the baby's ear.

In the opinion of the women who had gathered round, it was the singing that brought the little girl back to life, and her recovery had nothing whatever to do with the father's efforts, although he would have been held responsible if he had not been able to save her! The old men have some glimmerings of common sense, but the old women are terrible old witches and it is quite impossible to convince them.

When anyone is sick, it is the invariable custom to sing a monotonous phrase over and over again in the patient's ear to bring him back to health; and, wherever a pain is felt, it is usual to cut the skin down to the third integument to let the sickness out. On one occasion a man was suffering from acute abdominal pains, and his relations, who wanted to cut him open, came to the mission fathers to seek their approval of this drastic treatment. Here was an awkward predicament! If the sick man was cut open, he was sure to die; and, since nothing would induce him to go to the hospital at Darwin for skilled attention, he might die in any case. In either event the fathers would be held responsible. They stood firm and refused their approval. However, while the relations were hesitating in view of the emphatic assertions of the mission fathers, the man made a surprising recovery. The cure was of course ascribed to the singing, not to the good advice that kept the man on a starvation diet of water only.

755 The islanders firmly believe that they will be poisoned if they go to Darwin for treatment, but they will always trust their own people. One man, who had been employed on a pearling lugger (all the islanders are naturally good seamen), had a leg taken by a crocodile, and was forced to find some new way of making a living. He had learnt a lot too much in the years that he was away, and, on his return to Bathurst Island, he set up in practice as a witch-doctor. A woman on the point of